

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 IO-06 PM-03 INR-05
CIAE-00 SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 OES-02
EB-03 /056 W
-----210954Z 121519 /15/17

O P 201615Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6842
AMEMBASSY ROME NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
CINCUSNAVEUR
COMSIXTHFLT
EUCOM
SECDEF WASHDC
USDOCOSOUTH

S E C R E T TUNIS 3543

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4)

NEA ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR MULCAHY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS ENRG PFOR TS LY
SUBJECT: TUNISIAN/LIBYAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE:
TUNISIAN/U.S. TRAINING EXERCISE SCHEDULED
FOR MAY 23

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REF: A. STATE 115659, B. VALLETTA 571

1. WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED REFTELS A AND B. IN REGARD
TO REFTEL A, PARA TWO, I AM UNCERTAIN WHAT INFORMATION
DEPARTMENT HAS WHICH WOULD MAKE IT APPEAR THAT LIBYANS
MAY REACT POSITIVELY TO TUNISIAN ATTEMPT PUT BEST FACE
ON WITHDRAWAL OF DRILLING RIG SCARABEO IV. WHILE SENIOR

TUNISIAN OFFICIALS HAVE IMPLIED THAT LIBYANS ACQUIESCED IN WITHDRAWAL OF ITALIAN DRILLING RIG, WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT THIS SO (TUNIS 3475). TO THE CONTRARY, TUNISIAN PRESS, MAY 20, AS WELL AS ITALIAN TV, REPORTS THAT MAJOR JALLUD HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN ROME ON MAY 19 AT WHICH HE STATED THAT LIBYA HAD SUSPENDED BARTER NEGOTIATIONS WITH ITALY AS A RESULT OF WITHDRAWAL SCARABEO IV. JALLUD QUOTED AS STATING PUBLICLY "WE CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT THE SCARABEO PROCEED WITH OPERATION AT THE SITE ON THE BASIS OF THE SIGNED AGREEMENT." WE HAVE ALSO JUST RECEIVED TRIPOLO 659 REPORTING THAT CHATTY APPARENTLY HAS HAD PROTRACTED DISCUSSIONS WITH LIBYANS OVER CONTIENTAL SHELF ISSUE BUT WITH NO INDICATION OF RESULTS.

2. IN REGARD TO REF B WE NOTE APPARENT DETERMINATION OF READING AND BATES TO PROCEED WITH DRILLING OPERATION IN DISPUTED ZONE (ALTHOUGH IT IMPLIED BY READING AND BATES THAT SOMETHING MIGHT POSSIBLY OCCUR TO HALT THIS PARTICULAR OPERATION) AND THAT DRILLING RIG "J.W. BATES" MAY BE ARRIVING IN DISPUTED ZONE ABOUT MAY 23, OR EARLIER THAN WE UNDERSTOOD WAS ANTICIPATED.

3. AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE SIXTH FLEET VESSEL USS DEWEY NOW IN TUNISIAN PORT OF SFAX. DEWEY WILL BE CONDUCTING EXERCISE WITH TUNISIAN FLAGSHIP BOURGUIBA ON MAY 23. THIS IS ONE OF PERIODIC ROUTINE TRAINING EXERCISES (IN THIS CASE INVOLVING MANEUVERING, EXERCISES AND ELECTRONIC/OPTICAL TRACKING) WHICH HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR SOME WEEKS. WHILE CONCERNED MILITARY COMMANDS AND DIA AWARE OF THIS
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EXERCISE IT MAY NOT HAVE COME TO ATTENTION OF POLICY LEVELS STATE AND DEFENSE. OUR POLICY IN PAST HAS BEEN TO PROCEED WITH SUCH EXERCISES EVEN THOUGH RELATIONS BETWEEN TUNISIALAND LIBYA IN PERIOD OF TENSION (AS FOR EXAMPLE, IN LATE JULY AND EARLY AUGUST OF LAST YEAR) WHILE BEING CAREFUL TO STAY CLEAR OF AREAS OF POSSIBLE TROUBLE.

4. PARTICULARS OF EXERCISE AS FOLLOWS: SS BOURGUIBA PLANS DEPART BIZERTE 1000 SUNDAY, MAY 22, TO RENDEZVOUS WITH DEWEY AT 34 DEGREES 20 MINUTES NORTH AND 11 DEGREES 40 MINUTES EAST, WHICH OFF KERKENNA ISLANDS AND ABOUT 59 MILES TO WEST OF SCARABEO IV DRILLING SITE. AFTER FOUR HOUR EXERCISE BEGINNING 1100 MAY 23 USS DEWEY WILL PROCEED DUE NORTH TO WEST OF LAMPEDUSA AND PANTELLERIA AND RETURN TO GAETA. WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT FOLLOWING EXERCISE SS BOURGUIBA WILL PROCEED TO SCARABEO IV SITE FOR PICKET DUTY AS IT HAS BEEN DOING ON ROTATION BASIS SINCE FEBRUARY. CHIEF

USLOT HAS PLANNED TO BE ABOARD BOURGUIBA DURING
EXERCISE RETURNING TO SFAX VIA TUNISIAN PATROL BOAT
AFTERWARDS (AND, OF COURSE, BEFORE IT PROCEEDS TO
OTHER DUTIES).

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WE HAVE NO INFORMATION HERE THAT
WOULD WARRANT CHANGING PLANS FOR THIS ROUTINE EXERCISE,
BUT IN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS OF WHICH WE HAVE JUST
LEARNED WE WISH DEPARTMENT TO BE AWARE OF DETAILS.
ADVISE ONLY IF THERE ARE OBJECTIONS TO EXERCISE IN
WHOLE OR IN PART.
KING

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Message Attributes

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